(b) Delhi-Hyderabad is an 'A' route. Tract renewal and maintenance works are carried out regularly depending upon the need and availability of funds. For ensuring the safety and punctuality, track is inspected regularly and corrective action taken promptly whenever required.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Standard Gauge in Andhra Pradesh

1429. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have cleared a proposal to introduce standard gauge in parts of Andhra Pradesh, instead of broad gauge;

(b) if so, the extent of length which would be taken up in the current year for conversion to standard gauge;

(c) whether any routes have been identified in the State;

(d) if so, the details of such routes and the distance thereof; and

(e) the possible date of commencing this conversion work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Free Rail Travel for Farmers

†1430. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would provide free to and fro rail travel facility to farmers, on the pattern of Railway and other Central and State Government employees;

(b) if so, the deails thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to formulate a scheme to provide free rail travel facilities to farmers from one State to others and the metropolitan cities every year, Zone-wise/State-wise?

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

Purified drinking water at railway stations

1431. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that the drinking water kept at railway stations in the country is not purified and is spreading some dangerous diseases; and

(b) if so, details of action proposed by the Ministry of Railways to ensure provision of purified drinking water at all the railway stations, in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No impure water is supplied and only potable water is provided at all railway stations.

(b) Does not arise.

Regional balance in rail projects

1432. SHRI K. C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Railways is considering to evolve new formula, striking regional balance and equitable distribution of rail projects, in the coming years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to reflect the same in the Railway Budget for 2002-2003 and the subsequent Budgets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) The allocaiton of funds proposed in Budget 2002-03, to projects, is based on the formula contained in Minister of Railways' Budget Speech 2002-03.